

**National Park Service**  
**Department of the Interior**  
**Superintendent's Compendium**  
Of Designations, Closures, Permit  
Requirements and Other  
Restrictions  
Imposed Under Discretionary  
Authority



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**El Morro National Monument**

Approved:

/s/

March 29, 2006

date: \_\_\_\_\_

Kayci Cook Collins, Superintendent

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In accordance with regulations and the delegated authority provided in Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations ("36 CFR"), Chapter 1, Parts 1-7, authorized by Title 16 United States Code, Section 3, the following regulatory provisions are established for the proper management, protection, and public use of those portions of El Morro National Monument under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service (NPS). Unless otherwise stated, these regulatory provisions apply in addition to the requirements contained in 36 CFR, Chapter 1, Parts 1-7.

In addition to these regulations, the following are also provided:

Written determinations, which explain the reasoning behind the Superintendent's use of discretionary authority, are required by Section 1.5(c) and appear in this document or as attached files contained in Appendix A. Appendix A documents are available for review in the Chief Rangers Office at El Malpais National Monument, 123 East Roosevelt Avenue, Grants, New Mexico as well as at the Law Enforcement Specialist's Office at El Morro National Monument.

Section 1.6(f) states that a list of those activities that require a permit must be maintained. That list appears in this document under 1.6.

As required by 1.7(b), these regulations, permit requirements, and written determinations shall be updated annually and made available to the public upon request.

## **PART 1 - GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### **Definitions [Reference 36 CFR § 1.4]**

Camp - a place usually away from urban areas where tents or simple buildings (as cabins) are erected for shelter or for temporary residence.

Camping - to make camp or occupy a camp.

Climbing - Ascending or descending rocks with the aid of any equipment including, but not limited to, ropes, anchors, bolts, picks, pitons and related equipment.

Contained Fire - A fire kindled in an established fire grate or in a portable fire/cooking container that serves to contain all flame, fuel, ash and debris from all contact with the ground or other materials outside the container. This includes propane cook stoves, barbeque grills, sterno stoves and other such approved devices.

El Morro National Monument Visitor Center Complex - All of the buildings, supplies, materials and infrastructure in the general location of the El Morro National Monument Visitor Center located south of mile 44.6, Highway 53, approximately 12 miles east of Ramah, New Mexico. This includes the entrance road, parking areas, and all other associated infrastructure.

Hunting Camps - A camp where the individuals are legally hunting, scouting and/or supporting legitimate hunting operations on lands bordering National Park Service property.

Pack animal - Horses, burros, mules, other hoofed mammals and llamas.

Park Road - Park road means the main-traveled surface of a roadway open to motor vehicles, owned, controlled or otherwise administered by the National Park Service. (As defined in 36 CFR.)

Picnic - An excursion or outing with food usually provided by members of the group and eaten in the open; also: the food provided for a picnic.

Special Park Uses - As defined by Director's Order 53 a "special park use" is:

A short-term activity that takes place in a park area and:

Provides a benefit to an individual, group or organization, rather than the public at large.

Requires written authorization and some degree of management control from the NPS in order to protect park resources and the public interest.

Is not prohibited by law or regulation; and is neither initiated, sponsored, nor conducted by the NPS.

### **Section 1.5., Closure and Public Use Limits**

The following public use limits are established for all or for the listed portions of the monument, and the following closures are established for all or a portion of the park to all public use or to a certain use or activity:

General public access to El Morro National Monument is limited to the visitor center, Inscription Trail and Mesa Top Trail, picnic area, campground, administrative areas and entrance road during established park hours as well as while traveling non-stop across the section of New Mexico Highway 53 Right Of Way within the monument boundaries.

Visitor use is limited to the developed trail system within the monument during standard hours of operation: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm during the winter season; and from 8:00 am to 7:00 pm in the summer season, or as posted seasonally at the monument's visitor center and entrance signs.

All portions of the Inscription and Mesa Top Trails are closed from 4:00 pm to 9:00 am during the winter season; and from 6:00 pm to 8:00 am in the summer season, or as posted seasonally at the monument's visitor center and entrance signs.

Vehicle access and traffic to El Morro National Monument is limited to designated parking areas and established, paved roadways.

Those utilizing the picnic area located directly north of the El Morro National Monument visitor center are required to remain on the graveled area adjacent to that picnic area.

***Determination:*** All visitors to El Morro National Monument must initially pass through the visitor center contact area in order to pay the entrance fee, and to be informed of the significance of the monument, the sensitivity of natural and cultural resources, and applicable resource-related regulations.

**Temporary Trail Closures:** Both the Inscription Trail and/or the Mesa Top Trail may be closed on a temporary basis due to adverse environmental conditions.

***Determination:*** Conditions for temporary closure of the trails may include snow, ice, high winds, thunderstorms and lightning, presence of potentially hazardous wildlife, fire danger, or when there is a danger of rock-fall. It may also be necessary to close the trails during major maintenance and preservation activities.

**Employee Residence Area:** Access to the employee residence area is restricted to employees and their designated guests or authorized contractors.

***Determination:*** Due to the remote nature of El Morro National Monument and because of the need for expanded vigilance over its fragile resources, it has been deemed necessary to house employees within an NPS residence area contained within the monument's boundaries. In the interest of maintaining the privacy and safety of these employees, public visitation to this area is prohibited.

**Rock Climbing:** Climbing is prohibited anywhere within the monument.

***Determination:*** Inscription Rock is composed primarily of Zuni Sandstone, which by its nature is extremely fragile, brittle, highly fractured, and is not considered compatible with public climbing activities. Climbing activities would place those involved (as well as those utilizing the trails directly below the cliff faces) at high risk of personal injury or death since vertical surfaces of Zuni Sandstone could fail under the weight of a climber. Climbing will also damage the rock surfaces and potentially threaten the irreplaceable inscriptions for which the monument was established.

## **Section 1.6(f), Permits**

In compliance with 36 CFR 1.6(f), the following are activities requiring a special use permit through the Superintendent:

The following activities related to Public Use Limits:

- After hours visitation or use, Section 1.5
- Operating a motor vehicle off designated roads, Section 4.10(a)
- Driving or parking more than 10 feet off a designated road, Section 4.10(a)
- Carry or possess weapons, Section 2.4(d)
- Camping, Section 2.10
- Specimen collection, Section 2.5
- Aircraft and Air Delivery, Section 2.17
- Explosives, Section 2.38
- Special Events, Section (i.e. weddings, baptisms) Section 2.50
- Public Assemblies, Meetings, Section 2.51
- Sale or Distribution of Printed Matter, Section 2.52
- Commercial filming or photography Section 5.5(a) and (b)
- Use of commercial vehicles on park area roads Section 5.6 (c)

## **Section 2.1., Preservation of Natural, Cultural and Archeological Resources**

All public pedestrian use is restricted to the Inscription Trail and Mesa Top Trail, the visitor center, campground and picnic area, and the paved, established roadways. Leaving an established trail at any time or to shortcut between portions of the same trail is prohibited.

Visitation to undeveloped areas or after-hours visitation may only occur with written permission of the Superintendent.

Direct pedestrian access to El Morro National Monument lands from New Mexico Highway 53, the entrance road and the campground is prohibited. All public pedestrian access will be routed along the entrance road and through the Visitor Center complex.

The following archeological sites and historic resources are open to the public, as viewed from existing, maintained trails:

- Inscriptions along the Inscription Trail (stops numbered 1 to 21)
- Atsinna Pueblo, on the Mesatop Trail (stops numbered 31 to 32)

All other archeological sites are closed to the public.

***Determination:*** The historic and archeological sites listed above are open to the public. These sites are identified in the El Morro National Monument Resource Management Plan as being open to the public since they are 1) the primary cultural resources for which the monument was established; 2) adequately protected by allowing visitors to view them from a distance that does not threaten the sites themselves; 3) well documented and monitored regularly; and, 4) (in the case of Atsinna Pueblo) have been previously modified by visitor impacts or stabilization efforts.

*The undeveloped areas outside of the established roads, trail system and physical structures of El Morro National Monument contain numerous and relatively pristine archeological resources and sensitive cryptobiotic soils. Unrestricted travel by either foot or vehicle is likely to unacceptably impact such fragile resources.*

*There are numerous documented cases on file where archeological resources have been illegally removed from their original locations or disturbed within the boundaries of El Morro National*

*Monument by those walking off-trail through these dense archeological sites. Such disturbance or removal of artifacts damages the otherwise virtually intact archeological record and constitutes disruption to the prehistoric timeline represented at El Morro National Monument.*

## **Section 2.2 (e), Wildlife Protection**

Hunting camps are prohibited within the monument.

The use of artificial light sources to deliberately illuminate or view wildlife including night vision, infrared, thermal imaging, or ultra-violet (black light) devices of any kind are prohibited in El Morro National Monument, unless the Superintendent has issued a permit to specifically engage in such activities.

***Determination:*** *Hunting or taking of any wildlife is prohibited within the boundaries of El Morro National Monument. Hunting camps, by their nature, will potentially constitute the possession of weapons and the display of taken wildlife, both prohibited by 36 CFR. Activities such as spotlighting or intentionally illuminating wildlife represent deliberate actions that cause significant disturbance to wildlife and are often associated with the illegal taking (poaching) of wildlife.*

## **Section 2.10 Camping**

Overnight camping within the boundaries of the monument is restricted to the established campground.

All campsites are available on a first come, first served basis, unless specifically authorized by the Superintendent.

All campsites are for the express use of fee-paying, legitimate campers. Loitering and other non-camping related use is prohibited, unless specifically authorized by the Superintendent.

The Superintendent may designate sites or areas, and establish conditions for camping. Campers are restricted to not more than two (2) vehicles per campsite and not more than twelve (12) people per campsite.

The erection of tents will be restricted to the actual confines of each campsite.

Those using the El Morro National Monument campground are required to remain within a distance of 150 feet from the campground loop road.

Camping by any person, party or organization during any calendar year shall not exceed 14 days, either in a single period or combined separate times.

The length limit on all recreational vehicles utilizing campsites will be 27 feet overall, measured from bumper to bumper.

***Determination:*** *The campground at El Morro National Monument is quite small (nine sites total) and receives significant yearly visitation. Damage to the surrounding natural and cultural resources is likely to result if camper movement and use is not restricted to specifically developed and designated areas. The design of the campground site pullouts will not practically or safely accommodate recreational vehicles longer than 27 feet without damaging adjacent resources or creating a traffic hazard.*

The filling of any water containers, tanks, or trailers at any water source at the El Morro National Monument campground for domestic or commercial use external to the boundaries of El Morro National Monument is prohibited.

***Determination:*** *The domestic water supply at the El Morro National Monument Campground is intended for use by visitors immediately utilizing park facilities. This water supply is limited in*

*capacity and is not designed or intended for unrestricted use by those residing outside the monument. Private utilization of the water system may also result in a potentially hazardous back-flow of tainted water from unsanitary drums, water tanks, or trailers resulting in the widespread contamination of the monument's water system.*

### **Section 2.11, Picnicking**

Picnicking (i.e. non/camping, day use) is limited to the picnic tables and associated areas directly adjacent to the RV/bus parking lot, north of the Visitor Center complex.

Visitors wishing to carry and consume food on the trail system must carry out all uneaten food and associated trash for disposal in an appropriate trash receptacle.

***Determination:*** *Trash receptacles are not provided along the trail system. Food and other trash not properly disposed of will disfigure the landscape and may encourage nuisance or possibly hazardous wildlife behavior.*

### **Section 2.12, Audio Disturbances**

Quiet hours in the El Morro National Monument campground will be maintained between the hours of 10PM (2200 hours) and 8AM (0800 hours). During these periods the following is prohibited:

The operation of an electrical generator.

Unreasonable operation of audio devices such as radios, television sets, tape and CD players or musical instruments.

Or creating unreasonable noise that would impact on park users.

***Determination:*** *El Morro National Monument's tranquility and natural sounds contribute to the experience of camping in the campground. Unreasonable human-caused noise intrudes on this unique resource, detracts from the visitor experience, and could disrupt natural wildlife behavior.*

### **Section 2.13, Fires**

During periods of high fire danger, any open fires, wood or otherwise, and the use of charcoal are prohibited within the monument. Under conditions of high fire danger, self-contained gas grills or stoves are allowed in the picnic area and campground.

Open ground fires are prohibited outside the established, contained fire pits in the campground.

***Determination:*** *El Morro National Monument contains seasonally flammable plant communities such as grasslands, dense stands of pinon/juniper trees and ponderosa pines. Ground fires and open fires outside of the developed fire pits in the campground create an undue risk of wildfire that would put the visiting public, park neighbors, staff and resources in jeopardy.*

### **Section 2.14, Sanitation and refuse**

**Waste and Trash Disposal:** The disposal of human body waste is restricted to developed restrooms at the Visitor Center and Campground. All other trash must be disposed of only in appropriate trash receptacles.

***Determination:*** *Due to heavy public use, all human waste will be properly disposed of in restrooms provided by the National Park Service, otherwise highly unsanitary conditions would prevail that would potentially detract from a safe, healthy, and positive visitor experience. Trash deposited outside of government provided receptacles (litter) represents a disfigurement of the landscape as well as a potential health hazard. Such conditions are not considered compatible*

*with the recreational activities and opportunities available at El Morro National Monument.*

### **Section 2.15, Pets**

Pets are allowed on the Inscription and Mesa Top trails provided they are on a leash, which shall not exceed 6 feet in length, and under physical control at all times.

Pets are prohibited from entering the water of the historic El Morro pool at all times.

Pet excrement must be disposed of in accordance with the following conditions:

Owners or persons having custody or control of any animal(s) will immediately remove and dispose of excrement voided by an animal(s) under their control. Excrement will be properly disposed of in trash containers.

**Determination:** *Unrestrained pets are likely to cause resource damage or possibly threaten visitors when encountered within the relatively close confines of the Monument's trail system. Large predators such as mountain lions and black bears are occasionally found in the monument and could easily injure or kill uncontrolled pets.*

*The historic El Morro pool is a sensitive cultural and natural resource and could be adversely impacted by the entrance of household pets.*

### **Section 2.16, Horses and Pack Animals**

Horses and other pack animals are prohibited within the boundaries of the monument except when used for park operations or interpretive demonstrations, or approved by the Superintendent for special purposes.

**Determination:** *Horses and other pack animals may cause long-term resource damage during their passage on soft soils or while grazing on native plants. Manure from these animals is likely to contain seeds from exotic plant species and noxious weeds that will spread, causing disruption to the natural ecosystem at El Morro National Monument.*

### **Section 2.20, Skating, Skateboards and Similar Devices**

The use of roller-skates, in-line skates, skateboards, and similar devices is prohibited.

**Determination:** *The steep terrain encountered on the trail system at El Morro National Monument precludes the safe use of roller-skates, in-line skates, skateboards, and similar devices.*

### **Section 2.21, Smoking**

Smoking is prohibited on all monument trails during periods of elevated fire danger.

**Determination:** *The presence of burning smoking materials of any type represents a fire risk during periods of elevated fire danger.*

### **Section 2.23, Fees**

Entrance fees will be charged at El Morro National Monument all year except on Public Lands Day. The superintendent may designate other days with special events as fee free days.

Camping fees will be charged at the monument during the spring, summer, and fall seasons when water is available in the campground.

**Determination:** *El Morro National Monument is a designated fee area.*

### **Section 2.35, Alcoholic Beverages and Controlled Substances**

Alcoholic beverages are allowed in the picnic and campground areas only.

**Determination:** *The consumption of alcoholic beverages on the monument's only trail system is an inappropriate activity considering the historic and culturally sensitive nature of the location, the purposes for which the area is maintained, as well as for reasons of general public safety and sanitation.*

### **Section 2.38, Explosives**

Using or possessing fireworks, firecrackers or other explosives devices is prohibited.

**Determination:** *Using or possessing fireworks, firecrackers or other explosives devices is inherently hazardous, constitutes a fire hazard and is not appropriate within a heavily visited protected natural and cultural resource.*

### **Section 2.51 Designated First Amendment/Public Assembly Location**

The area adjoining the picnic table on the southern side of the El Morro National Monument parking area, closest to the visitor center is designated as the First Amendment/Public Assembly Location.

### **Section 2.52 Sale or Distribution of Printed Matter Location**

The area adjoining the picnic table on the southern side of the El Morro National Monument parking area, closest to the visitor center is designated as the location for the Sale or Distribution of Printed Matter.

### **Section 3.21 (a) (1), Swimming**

Swimming in the historic El Morro pool is prohibited.

**Determination:** *The Historic El Morro Pool is a sensitive cultural and natural resource and is not an appropriate location for a recreational use, such as swimming.*

### **Section 4.3, Bicycles**

Bicycles are prohibited on all trails.

**Determination:** *The steep terrain and volume of pedestrian traffic encountered on the trail system at El Morro National Monument precludes the safe use of bicycles and similar devices.*

### **Section 4.17, Speed Limits**

The maximum speed limit on monument roads is 35 miles per hour and 15 miles per hour as posted on the entrance road, 15 miles per hour in the employee housing area, and 25 miles per hour on the service access road.

**Determination:** *Vehicle speed on monument roads is regulated to protect public safety and to enhance the visitor experience. Roads in the monument are narrow, seasonally congested, and slower speeds ensure that drivers and pedestrians are able to see each other at a safe distance.*